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STATUS OF THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL IN LARGER CITIES

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In connection with a building survey made at Spokane, a questionnaire relating to the junior high school was sent November 25, 1921, to all cities with a population of more than 100,000. Replies were received from sixty of the sixty-eight cities. These replies indicate clearly the present status of the junior high school in the larger cities and the reaction of practical school men to the junior high school movement.

The first question was "Do you have junior high schools?" To this question thirty-four cities answered "No." The comments accompanying many of the negative replies show that the lack of junior high schools in many of these cities is not at all due to opposition to them. The following are excerpts from such comments:

Atlanta: "The people of this city have just voted a \$4,000,000 bond issue, and we are contemplating building five junior high schools in the near future."

Birmingham: Superintendent C. B. Glenn says, "In my opinion there are merits in the plan, and it is my purpose to try it out in one or more schools of the city in the near future."

Buffalo: Superintendent E. C. Hartwell says, "We have several millions of dollars appropriated for junior high schools, but none of the buildings are even begun as yet."

Cambridge: "Recommended by the superintendent but not adopted by the school committee."

Camden is reorganizing the school system on the 6-3-3 plan "as building makes possible."

Chicago: Assistant Superintendent A. B. Wright says, "I regret to say that there are no junior high schools connected with the Chicago public school system."

Dayton is "putting up buildings."

Jersey City: Superintendent Henry Snyder says, "We have arranged for the erection of four buildings in which junior high schools will be established on the 6-3-3 plan. I have been in doubt as to the advisability of starting such schools, but I have finally concluded to make the experiment."

Louisville: Superintendent Z. E. Scott says, "I would recommend the adoption of the junior high school plan in a system large enough to finance it."

New Bedford: Superintendent Allen P. Keith says, "Not established yet. Buildings about to be built."

New Haven: Superintendent F. H. Beede is "distinctly favorable" to the idea and says, "We are about to introduce the junior high school plan."

Norfolk will "have two by September 1, 1922."

Omaha: Superintendent J. H. Beveridge says, "We provided for junior high schools in our bond issue. I am strongly in favor of this plan of organization. Our building program calls for five junior high schools."

Reading is "considering opening several in September, 1922."

San Francisco: Superintendent Alfred Roncovieri says, "I have recommended that this [establishment of junior high schools] be done for several years past. In January, 1922, we shall add the ninth grade to one of our intermediate schools. A new building has been planned and will be erected in the very near future."

Scranton has "tentative plans adopted," and Superintendent S. E. Weber says it is "the coming plan of school organization."

Spokane: Superintendent O. C. Pratt has recommended to the board the formal adoption of the 6-3-3 plan of organization and is now conducting a building survey with a view to deciding on the definite steps to be taken in bringing about such reorganization.

St. Paul: Superintendent S. O. Hartwell says, "We expect to begin the construction of our first junior high school building in about three months. We shall work toward the 6-3-3 plan."

Syracuse has "recently organized three junior high schools in grade schools and has two new buildings planned."

Worcester: Superintendent Harvey S. Gruver says, "We are just now beginning our first of five junior high schools which we

hope to have completed within the next ten years. We expect to occupy the first by September, 1923. We hope to add one new building every two years until the entire city is organized on the junior high school basis."

It is evident from these comments that at least twenty of the thirty-four cities which do not have the junior high school are distinctly favorable to the junior high school idea. Nearly all of the twenty have taken steps toward the reorganization of their school systems on the 6-3-3 plan. The superintendents of the fourteen other cities which do not have junior high schools merely answered "no" without indicating their attitude toward the junior high school idea.

Twenty-six cities have junior high schools already in operation. Reports from these cities in answer to the following questions are summarized in Table I.

1. Do you have junior high schools?
2. If so, are you reorganizing your school system on the 6-3-3 or the 6-2-4 plan?
3. How far has your reorganization proceeded?
4. When were junior high schools first started in your system?
5. In the light of your experience, what is your present reaction toward the junior high school idea?
6. Does the junior high school hold pupils in school better?
7. What are its marked advantages?
8. Its chief disadvantages?
9. Where conditions permit would you heartily recommend its adoption?

The unanimity of opinion about junior high schools in the cities which have such schools in actual operation is impressive. This tabulation of opinion needs to be enlarged upon and clarified by the answers to Questions 7 and 8 and by supplementary comment.

For Baltimore, Assistant Superintendent David E. Weglein says, "We believe the junior high school idea is the correct one and the school board has adopted the plan of reorganizing the entire school system on a 6-3-3 basis." As advantages he mentions "adaptation to the needs and abilities of individuals; better opportunity for the development of the curriculum; better transition from elementary schools to senior high schools." Disadvan-

tages are "lack of proper building facilities" and "lack of teachers especially trained for the work."

At Boston, Superintendent Jeremiah E. Burke states that "it is the aim of the Board of Superintendents to reorganize as speedily as may be practicable our school system on the 6-3-3 plan." The advantage he gives is "reconstruction of all curricula for Grades VII, VIII, and IX," and his word of warning is to "guard against 'gaps' between elementary, intermediate, and high schools."

TABLE I

INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM TWENTY-SIX CITIES HAVING JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

City	Questions							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	9	
Baltimore.....	Yes	6-3-3	Almost complete	1919	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Boston.....	Yes	6-3-3	Thirteen junior high schools	1913	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Cincinnati.....	Yes	6-3-3	One junior high school	1915	Favorable	Yes	Undecided	
Cleveland.....	Yes	6-3-3	About three-fourths	1915	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Columbus.....	Yes	6-3-3	Practically city-wide	1900	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Denver.....	Yes	6-3-3	Five built; one building	1917	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Des Moines.....	Yes	6-3-3	Two in old buildings; four new ones planned	1919	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Detroit.....	Yes	6-3-3	Six built, five more authorized of twenty-two	1915	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Grand Rapids.....	Yes	Various Types	Complete	1912	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Houston.....	Yes	6-3-3	Four built	1914	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Kansas City, Kan.	Yes	6-3-3	One	1916	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Kansas City, Mo.	Yes	6-2-3	Three	1918	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Los Angeles.....	Yes	6-3-3	About 50 per cent	1911	Favorable	No data	Yes	
Minneapolis.....	Yes	6-3-3	.....	1917	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Nashville.....	Yes	6-2-4	.....	1919	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
New York City.....	Yes	6-3-3	Thirty-nine	.....	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Oakland.....	Yes	Various Types	Ten	.....	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Philadelphia.....	Yes	6-3-3	Four built; one building	1917	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Richmond.....	Yes	5-3-3	Complete	1915	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Rochester.....	Yes	6-3-3	Two built; one building	.....	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Salt Lake City.....	Yes	6-3-3	Three-fourths complete	1911	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Springfield.....	Yes	6-3-3	.....	1916	Favorable	Think so	Yes	
St. Louis.....	Yes	6-3-3	One	1917	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Trenton.....	Yes	6-3-3	50 per cent	.....	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Washington.....	Yes	6-3-3	.....	1919	Favorable	Yes	Yes	
Youngstown.....	Yes	6-3-3	Two of eight	1921	Favorable	Yes	Yes	

Cincinnati specifies as advantages that the junior high school "permits better grouping of pupils according to ability, permits wider differentiation of subject-matter, enables the school to concentrate on a specific educational problem and offers better opportunity for extra-curricular activities."

Cleveland is "going ahead with our program of reorganizing" and is "now building two large junior high schools, and another of

fifty-one rooms is about ready for detail drawings." Advantages are "holding power, higher grade of instruction, and better preparation for the senior high school." Disadvantages are that it "costs slightly more and the danger of aping the senior high school."

Columbus reports that the junior high school "grows better all along." Its advantages are "opportunity to give greater variety of work to meet individual needs and better social grouping." As a disadvantage, it is "slightly more expensive, but not so when one considers the enriched program and enlarged opportunities."

In Denver "the plan has been most satisfactory." Advantages mentioned are "increased holding power and enrichment of curriculum."

For Des Moines, a disadvantage given is "cost, if you do not consider increased educational advantages."

At Detroit the junior high schools "give better opportunity for educational and vocational guidance, for segregation according to ability, and for socialized education."

For Grand Rapids, Superintendent W. A. Greeson gives as advantages the "promotion of pupils by subjects, opportunity to give an introduction to many kinds of industries and occupations, and opportunity to study the individual needs and capacities of each child." Its danger is that "of extreme specialization when teachers teach subjects rather than pupils."

At Houston, Principal H. N. Shofstall considers the "plan justified by results." It increases "enrolment and retention by providing enriched and differentiated curricula, and individual differences are better taken care of." Its chief disadvantage is the "difficulty in obtaining teachers who have the junior high school point of view."

In Kansas City, Kansas, Principal W. F. Shaw regards the junior high school as "incomparably better than the old system where properly handled." Among its advantages are "proper classification of pupils on the basis of I.Q., better school spirit, adaptation of courses to needs of pupils, and better facilities for supernormal and subnormal children."

Kansas City, Missouri, reports the junior high school as "growing in popularity with teachers, pupils, and parents." Advantages mentioned are "subject promotion, providing for individual differences, and motivation of school work."

Los Angeles expects "to extend them as fast as possible." The junior high school "provides a richer course for Grades VII to IX." Its disadvantages are "added expense and the difficulty of finding properly trained teachers."

Minneapolis is "very favorable" to the junior high school idea. "At the age when pupils most need guidance and encouragement, individual attention and natural development are provided." As a disadvantage, the "per capita cost is very high, but the junior high school so simplifies the senior high school problems and equipment that eventually the average cost of the junior and senior high schools doubtless will be less than the former cost of the senior high school."

At Nashville, Miss Jennie J. Rowen says that the junior high school "bridges the gap between grammar and high-school departments, introduces elementary high-school work, election of subjects, and a fuller course for those who are compelled to stop school." As disadvantages, she specifies "extra cost, distance young pupils have to go, and difficulty in getting teachers suited for the work."

For New York City, Eugene A. Nifenecker, Director of Reference, Research, and Statistics, reports that "pupils seem to be ready for high-school work after a junior high school training. The junior high school affords an opportunity for rapid advancement of bright pupils and for proper placement of overage pupils, provides work suited to the interests of adolescents, and encourages social activities. The 6-3-3 plan has proved satisfactory in our city and is being gradually extended."

In Philadelphia, Associate Superintendent George Wheeler mentions as advantages that "the work can be more closely fitted to pupils, and the number of misfits is reduced. It shifts to a less dangerous period the change of schools which under the old arrangement occurred just when the compulsory law lessened its hold."

Richmond gives as advantages "electives, promotion by subject, and better teaching"; as a disadvantage, that it "increases costs."

For Rochester, Assistant Superintendent J. P. O'Hern says that "we regard the junior high school as a permanent part of our school organization. The three most distinctive values that we attach to the junior high school are the differentiated courses which meet the needs and capacities of pupils, the democracy of the school" in that it brings pupils of all courses "together in one student body, and the Americanization value." As to cost, "there is no question but that the junior high school plan costs more than instruction in the seventh and eighth grades of a grammar school," but "our people in Rochester believe that the cost is a secondary consideration."

Salt Lake City is "strongly in favor of it," the report asserting that there can be no question about the value of junior high school work. It affords a closer articulation with the work of the senior high school than was possible under the old system. Features of the junior high school not present in the grades it replaces are (*a*) departmental plan of work, (*b*) promotion by subjects, (*c*) differentiation of courses, (*d*) better adaptation to individual needs and capacities, (*e*) a shortening of the high-school course, (*f*) a better social atmosphere, and (*g*) a period for gradual adjustment to the system and methods of the senior high school."

Assistant Superintendent L. W. Rader of St. Louis reports as advantages that the junior high school "offers large numbers from which to group, differentiation, exploring, educational guidance," and offers as a disadvantage that "integral education should continue longer."

Youngstown feels that the junior high school "provides better for individual differences, offers opportunity to pupils to find themselves at a time when they can best afford to experiment," and as to disadvantages is "not conscious of them."

It is to be noted that nearly all of the disadvantages mentioned center about (1) the lack of teachers properly imbued with the junior high school point of view and (2) the added cost. As to the lack of trained teachers, the remedy is obvious. While buildings are being erected for the junior high school, teachers for it should be carefully selected and given special courses acquainting them with

the junior high school philosophy and methods, and such training should continue after the junior high school is launched.

The added cost is wholly due to added service and is not inherent in the junior high school idea. In other words, if communities were content to have classes as large and teachers, buildings, and equipment of the same kind now tolerated in seventh and eighth grades, the cost would not increase. But in view of the far greater opportunity for service to young people of adolescent age, American cities are clearly deciding, as has Rochester, that the cost is a "secondary consideration."

Summarizing the status of the junior high school in cities of more than 100,000 in population, it may be said that both the attitude and the action of the schoolmen in these cities are distinctly in its favor. Of the sixty-eight cities, sixty replied to the questionnaire. Of the sixty, twenty-six have junior high schools in operation, and twenty have them in various stages of preparation. Only fourteen cities merely say, without comment, that they do not have junior high schools. From this evidence it appears, as one of the superintendents remarks, that the junior high school is undoubtedly "the coming plan of organization" for schooling pupils during the period of early adolescence.